

Buckingham Palace
Carrs Hill
Charlottesville
Albemarle County
Virginia

HABS No. VA-979

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VA
2-CHAR,
3A-

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

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Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Addendum to
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

HABS No. VA-979

Location: Carrs Hill, Charlottesville, Virginia.

Owner: The University of Virginia.

Present State: Dormant.

Significance: Buckingham Palace is a two room cottage dating from the mid nineteenth century. It is a remnant of a nineteenth century student dormitory complex on Carrs Hill that was largely destroyed when the University of Virginia President's House was built on the site.

I. HISTORIC INFORMATION.

Following is a record of the ownership of Carrs Hill from 1828. Prior to that time the tract was part of the estate of James Burnley.

Albemarle County Deed Book 27, page 132, recorded May 7, 1828.

Daniel A. Piper and wife

to

Mary Garner, daughter of James Burnley decd

42 5/8 acres

\$10.

Albemarle County Deed Book 27, page 136, recorded May 7, 1828.

Mary Garner

to

Daniel A. Piper and wife

42 5/8 acres

\$10.

Albemarle County Deed Book 28, page 6, recorded May 6, 1829.

Daniel A. Piper

to

Arthur S. Brockenbrough

42 5/8 acres

\$1065.625.

From a mulberry stump on Turnpike Road opposite the University of Virginia, N 27 1/2° E, 83 3/4 poles; S 43 1/3° E, 65 poles; S 46 1/2° E, 10 1/2 poles; S 21 1/2° W, 54 poles; 35 1/2 poles on the same line to Turnpike Road; along Turnpike Road 92 35/100 poles to commencement.

Albemarle County Will Book 11, page 28, recorded May 28, 1832.

Will of Arthur S. Brockenbrough.

"My estate real and personal in Richmond and Albemarle" to brothers John and Thomas Brockenbrough "to dispose of the same or such parts thereof as they may think proper, and from the proceeds to pay all my just debts, and the remainder either of property or money to divide among my wife and children."

Albemarle County Chancery Order Book 3, pages 1,24,82, October 15, 1849.

John Douglas, executor for John Douglas decd., plaintiff

vs.

John O'Neal, Daniel Piper, Elizabeth Piper, and Ann Burnley widow of James Burnley decd., defendants.

"The court is of opinion that while the whole of the land of James Burnley decd. purchased by the parties aforesaid, is liable to the claims of the plaintiff. . the portion last sold, is first liable. . Arthur S. Brockenbrough was the last purchaser thereof. . and therefore the land bought by him is first liable."

Therefore unless William H. Brockenbrough, son of Arthur S. Brockenbrough, shall within 60 days pay to the plaintiff the sum of \$1140.99 plus legal interest of \$548, the court orders that "Alexander Rives and James W. Saunders, who are hereby appointed commissioners for that purpose, shall. ." sell the property under question to settle the claim.

Albemarle County Chancery Order Book 3, page 215, July 20, 1851.

The court determines "the bonds executed by S. DeVere for the land purchased by him, to have been fully paid off & discharged, and that he is now entitled to a deed for said land."

Albemarle County Deed Book 50, page 483, recorded June 30, 1852.

James W. Saunders, commissioner,

to

Schele DeVere

42 5/8 acres

Albemarle County Deed Book 51, page 100, recorded July 1, 1852.

Schele DeVere

to

Thomas J. Randolph

42 5/8 acres

\$440

Albemarle County Deed Book 52, page 542, recorded June 19, 1854.

Thomas J. Randolph

to

Mrs. Sidney S. Carr

43 acres "on which she now resides"

\$4460

Albemarle County Deed Book 60, page 64, recorded November 14, 1863.

Mrs. Sidney S. Carr

to

Addison Maupin

42 5/8 acres, "Carrs Hill"

30,200 (Confederate dollars?)

Albemarle County Deed Book 63, page 32, recorded July 1, 1867.

Addison Maupin

to

Rector and Board of Visitors, University of Virginia

42 5/8 acres, "Carrs Hill"

\$10,000.00

The 1854 deed, Thomas J. Randolph to Mrs. Sidney S. Carr, is the earliest reference to occupancy of the tract. A plat of the University¹ drawn in 1858 or 1859 by William A. Pratt, Superintendant of Buildings and Grounds, shows a portion of the dormitory complex that was on Carrs Hill, and a larger building presumed to be the dining Hall run by Mrs. Carr. The plat does not show Buckingham Palace.

There is an unsubstantiated account² which attributes Buckingham Palace to two University students, William G. Field and Philip B. Jones. The University catalogs and alumni records³ show that these two were students in 1857-58 and 1858-59, and that Field was a student in 1859-60 and 1860-61. Both were from Orange County, Virginia.

The earliest positive reference to Buckingham Palace is in James Southall, In The Days Of My Youth.⁴ Mr. Southall was a student from 1888. He wrote that, during his student days,

Not a single fraternity house was then in existence, the nearest thing to it being the little one-storey cottage on Carr's Hill⁵ where the Dekes used to hold their Saturday night meetings. .

1. University of Virginia, Alderman Library, Manuscripts Division.
2. Charlottesville Daily Progress, June 30, 1974; Jane MacNelly, "Palace" has traces of past".
3. Students of the University of Virginia, Baltimore, 1878.
4. In The Days of My Youth: When I was a Student in the University of Virginia, 1888-1893, Chapel Hill, 1947.
5. Ibid., p.66.

The "Dekes" were the members of the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity. Mr. Southall also wrote that in 1891-92,

Our club meetings were held pretty regularly every Saturday night in the little DKE cottage on Carr's Hill where Tom Wood and Jeff Morris used to room together when I first came to college.⁶

During this period, the archives and secret meetings of the fraternity were kept in the cottage, which was continuously occupied by a fraternity member.

Following is a list of known occupants of Buckingham Palace.⁷

1892-93

Murray M. McGuire, Richmond (DKE)

1893-94

John Garnett Nelson, Alexandria (DKE) and
Henry Carrington Reily, Houston, Virginia (DKE)

1894-95

Nelson and Reily

1895-96

Cadwell Herrick, Shelbyville, Illinois

1896-97

Meriwether Blair Dickenson, Worsham, Virginia, and
Preston White Campbell, Abingdon, Virginia

1897-98

Dickenson and
Edwin Boinest Setzler, Pomaria, South Carolina

1898-99

Edward Raynsford Warner McCabe, Richmond

1899-1900

McCabe

1900-01

George Harrison Wallace, Canandaigua, New York

6. Ibid., p.175.

7. Corks and Curls, published annually by the students of the University of Virginia, volumes 6-15, 1893-1903.

1902-03

Stuart Gatewood Gibboney, Wytheville, Virginia

Other occupants of Buckingham Palace possibly include:

1859-60

William G. Field and Philip B. Jones (MacNelly)

post-1865

Philip B. and Betty Morris Jones (MacNelly)

c.1888-89

Tom Wood and Jeff Norris (Southall)

1903-04

William C. Latimer (Name scratched on window)

post-1904

John Sherwood Widdicombe (Name scratched on window)

The greater part of the Carrs Hill dormitories were torn down in the early twentieth century, when the President's House was built on the site. Buckingham Palace and one two-story portion of the older complex were preserved.

University President E.F.Shannon, who lived at Carrs Hill from 1960 to 1975, utilized Buckingham Palace as a playhouse for his daughters. The building is not in use now.

II. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

- A. Buckingham Palace is a one-story, two-room brick cottage, built during the latter part of the nineteenth century. It was originally used as student housing.
- B. Exterior
1. Dimensions: Breadth 22' 1 1/4"; Depth 15' 0"; Height from floorline to ridge of roof 13' 3 1/2"; Height from floorline to top of chimney 18' 5".
 2. Foundations: Brick, depth and form unknown.
 3. Walls: Brick, laid in common bond with bonding courses generally every eighth course. Bonding courses on adjacent walls do not correspond. Extensive repointing.
 4. Structural system: Brick bearing-wall.
 5. Porch: Extension of roof over door and window of eastern facade. Wooden structure with sheet-tin roofing. Supported by two wooden members, curved, joining the brick wall.
 6. Chimney: Brick, centered on roof ridge, with sheet-tin flashing around the base. Fourteen brick courses above the flashing, then one course corbelled 1" out, two courses corbelled 1" further out, one final course set 1" back in. Mortar cap, 1/4" thick, about half gone. The chimney is one brick thick throughout. The shaft measures 1' 4 1/2" broad by 2' 1" deep. At its largest, the chimney measures 1' 9" broad and 2' 6" deep. Height from ridge of roof is 5' 1 1/2". Some repointing of mortar joints.
 7. Door: On eastern facade, 3' 1/2" wide and 6' 6 3/8" tall. Wood, with nine glass panes, each 8 1/4" by 14 3/4". Four inset panels, two side-by-side on interior and exterior, each 7 3/4" wide and 12 3/4" tall, with 1 1/2" borders. The door and its muntins are painted black on the exterior, and light blue on the interior. Wooden frame and sill.
 8. Windows: Four windows of varying size and form. Northern window is a casement, opening outwards, 2' 2 1/2" wide and 2' 10" tall inside its wooden frame. The four panes measure 9 3/4" by 14 3/4". Western window is a 6 over 6 double-hung, measuring 3' 1" wide and 5' 6 1/4" tall inside its wooden frame. Its panes measure 9 3/4" by 14 3/4". Two panes have scratched inscriptions (see II, C, 7). Southern window is a 6 over 6 double-hung, measuring 3' 1" wide and 4' 9" tall inside its wooden frame. Panes measure 9 1/2" by 11 1/2".

Eastern window is a 6 over 6 double-hung, measuring 2' 10 7/8" wide and 4' 9" tall inside its wooden frame. Panes measure 9 1/2" by 11 1/2". Two wooden lowered shutters, painted black, each measuring 1' 5 1/4" by 4' 6".

9. Roof: Sheet tin, with raised seams and attached tin gutters. Framed with wood. Attic inaccessible. The tin is in very poor condition.
10. Cornices: Three brick courses, each corbelled out 1". Roofing tin overlaps partially the top course on east and west. Top course on north and south painted white and partially overlapped by gable ornament.
11. Gables: Northern and southern facades have ornamental woodwork under roof gables. Vertical wooden boards, painted white. The lower edges on the northern gable are cut at a 30° angle from the horizontal. The lower edges on the southern gable are cut at a 45° angle. The upper edges on both gables are covered by roofing tin and wooden mouldings.

C. Interior.

1. Plan: Two rooms. The southern room measures 13' 3 3/4" by 9' 5 1/8", with the fireplace back protruding into the space. The northern room measures 13' 4" by 10' 7 1/4". The fireplace opens into the northern room. The northern room has three windows. A thin framed wall separates the two rooms.
2. Flooring: Variable-width wooden boards, running north-south. Floor framing inaccessible. A brick hearth is flush with the flooring, and measures 5' 7" by 1' 4".
3. Walls and ceiling: Plaster, painted white. Ceiling height varies between 8' 11" and 9' 1". Wall and ceiling framing inaccessible. No interior cornices. Baseboards 5 3/4" high, with 3/4" quarter-rounds.
4. Doorways: One interior doorway, without a door, between chimney and front door. 6' 8 1/4" high, 2' 8" wide. Wooden moulding around. No sill.
5. Hardware: Electrical outlets and light fixtures, added at an unknown date.
6. Fireplace: Brick, opening into northern room. Fireplace opening measures 2' 8 1/8" wide, 2' 10 3/8" tall. The width tapers to 1' 4" at the back. The fireplace is 1' 5" deep at floor level, tapering to 1' 3" at the top.

The fireplace brick is painted black. The wall plaster at the front of the fireplace opening is also black. There is a wooden framing around the opening, 4' 5 1/2" wide, painted light blue. The framing supports a mantelshelf, 5' 5 5/8" long and 7 1/2" wide, at a height of 4' 1 3/4".

There is an unpainted brick hearth, flush with the floor. The rear of the fireplace, which protrudes into the southern room, is white-painted brick.

7. Inscriptions: Two of the window-panes of the western windows have scratched inscriptions. The upper central pane of the bottom sash is inscribed:

W.C.Latimer, Balton, S.C. A rainy, snowy day,
Jan. 20, 1903.

The lower central pane of the bottom sash, the pane immediately below the first-mentioned pane, is inscribed:

From this window, pensive, have I seen
What I was and what I might have been.
The past and future dim, like yonder mount,
And life is such a brief, uncertain fount.
John Sherwood Widdicombe

D. Site

Buckingham Palace is on Carrs Hill, to the north of the Jeffersonian buildings for the University of Virginia. Another fragment of the nineteenth-century complex stands north and east of Buckingham Palace. To the east of Buckingham Palace, 85 feet away, is the University of Virginia President's House, called Carrs Hill. A garage is directly north of Buckingham Palace. The site is maintained by the University of Virginia Department of Buildings and Grounds.

III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was prepared for the class, Measured Drawing: Studies in Vernacular Architecture, at the University of Virginia, under the direction of K. Edward Lay, Associate Professor of Architecture, during the spring semester, 1976, by John Wells, undergraduate student of Architectural History. This material was donated to HABS, and was neither supervised by the Survey, nor edited by members of the HABS staff.

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